

10-19-1918

## Letter from May-ling Soong Chiang, 1918-10-19, Shanghai, China, to Emma Mills

May-ling Soong Chiang

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## Letter from May-ling Soong Chiang, 1918-10-19, Shanghai, China, to Emma Mills

### Transcription

30 Seymour Road  
Shanghai  
19 October, 1918

Dearest Dada:

Your 50th just at hand, and I too have a lot to tell you. Well about two weeks, I was in the machine when it ran over a kid, I almost died of fear, especially as everyone (all of the lower classes) appeared on the street and swamped us. Well, the kid was conscious but bleeding, and the woman his mother began to howl like mad. I [hurdled] the kid in the car and told the chauffeur to drive to St. Luke's Hosp. When we had gone about a hundred yards, the gasoline gave out. I then jumped into the rickshaw, got another one for the kid & mother & told the chauffeur not to leave the car under any circumstances. The rickshaws were so slow, & I was afraid the kid was dying, & so when we passed an empty Ford, I begged the owner to take us in his car. He was a foreigner & was pretty decent about taking in the dirty brat and all. We got to the hospital & I left the kid there. One of the doctors was nice & told me not to worry as it was the kid's fault; the other one was nasty and said the kid had a broken rib and probably complications would set in.

I then went & bought some gasoline at the [page break] other end of town; you see I was out in the country when the accident happened. When I returned to the scene, the car was surrounded, but the chauffeur had run away. Wasn't that rotten of him? You see he was a new chauffeur and I was taking a trial run, & so had not gotten him a license at the municipal council. I tried to telephone to the different garages for a chauffeur: but was told that they only let each chauffeur drive his own car! Finally I hailed a passing machine, a man with a chauffeur, & while the man took me home in his car, the chauffeur drove mine

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home.

When I arrived home, I was a nervous wreck, & Mother had not returned. I was to pick her up at five o'clock down town. And my big brother had gone to Tientsin. Finally Mother came, and I told her all about the accident, and she was awfully worried & said our house would be surrounded by low-class detectives especially as Brother was away. I couldn't eat any dinner & went to bed when the telephone rang insistently. As I had left word at the hosp. to call me up if the kid died, I jumped out of bed & grabbed the receiver & found it was the [page break] Police Station wanting to know the facts. I told the officer & told him for mercy sakes' not to let my name appear in the paper, for Mother has an awful dread of publicity. Mother was afraid I had to appear in court especially as the chauffeur had run away, & so in the middle of the night she sent someone to get a Mr. Wang who is one of the family friends & told him to appear in court in my stead in case I should be called, as no Chinese girl of good family ever appears in court. In the meanwhile I telephoned one of my uncles, - who unluckily had not arrived home. The suspense was awful.

The next morning Mother came to my room and found me delirious with a fever of 105 and wildly yelling not to have the automobile run over me. Mother got two doctors, and both said that I was scared, & that was the trouble. For three days I was delirious with high fever. At the end of that time, in one of my lucid moments, my sister Mrs. Sun told me casually that a certain friend of mine, the very best friend I've ever had (although the family did not know of this) had gone to Siberia to [page break] volunteer as a Red Cross doctor. We had decided under the circumstances not to correspond so that was the first I had heard of it. I certainly was not improved by the news, and I do not know whether in my delirious condition I said anything I should feel sorry about. One day while I was very ill, one of the police officers came to interview me. I was so feverish that he could not make sense of what I said especially as from weakness

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I would drop off to sleep in the middle of a remark.

I feel better now altho still so weak that  
I cannot do much. And I confess I am constantly  
thinking of Siberia!

One day while ill the Ahmah spilt a basin  
of boiling hot water down my front. She was trying  
to give me a steaming as I was coughing up blood.  
The burn is very severe, and great huge  
blisters which are now peeling off is the result.  
I can no longer wear foreign clothes for the  
next six months. The other day one of the men came  
to see me, and for the first time since I came  
home, I had on Chinese clothes - I asked him  
how he likes me in them, and he said I  
look more "approachable." I wonder, is that a com- [page break]  
pliment? Anyway considering that he has wanted to  
approach me on a certain question for some time,  
this may give him a chance. Only, I have not  
decided whether I want to be approached or  
not. It is a hard question under the circumstances,  
I guess I'll just let things take their natural  
course and trust to fate.

I wish I could go off to be a nurse, only  
well, Mother & the family never would consent. I  
almost went to Tientsin with my brother, only  
Mother did not want me to leave her here in the  
house with only the servants. T.V. is still up  
there & from all appearances will be up for  
quite a while yet.

They have not found the chauffeur who  
ran away. We have a new chauffeur and  
the kid is all right now. It didn't kill him,  
& his ribs were not broken; he was only slightly  
hurt. I go out now in the machine, but it is  
only because Mother wishes me to, for I am so  
nervous all the time in it. With love,

Daughter

Love to Grandad. Wish he'd come over here.



30 Seymour Road

Shang Hai.

19 October, 1918.

Dearest Dad:

Your 50th just at hand, and I too have a lot to tell you. Two about two weeks, I was in the machine when it ran over a kid. I almost died of fear, especially as everyone (all of the lower classes) appeared on the street and swarmed us. Well, the kid was conscious but bleeding, and the woman his mother began to howl like mad. I huddled the kid in the car and told the chauffeur to drive to St. Luke's Hosp. When we had gone about a hundred yards, the gasoline gave out. I then jumped into the ~~machine~~ rickshaw, got another one for the kid & mother & told the chauffeur not to leave the car under any circumstances. The rickshaws were so slow, & I was afraid the kid was dying, & so when we passed an empty Ford, I begged the owner to take us in his car. He was a foreigner & was pretty decent about taking in the dirty brat and all. We got to the hospital & I left the kid there. One of the doctors was nice & told me not to worry as it was the kid's fault; the other one was nasty and said the kid had a broken rib and probably complications would set in. I then went & bought some gasoline at the



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Daughter.

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